Inflatable method statement

EC-MS-01 | Version 1.0 | Issued 14 November 2026

Purpose and scope

Required procedures for delivery, installation, handover, supervised use and collection of continuous-air, land-based play inflatables. Covers bouncy castles, slide combinations, slides and obstacle courses only where the individual manual and inspection permit that use. Read with EC-RA-01 and the hire instructions. Specialist games, sealed-air devices, water inflatables and mechanical rides need additional, equipment-specific assessments. This is a general procedure, not a completed inspection of a particular venue.

1. Plan the hire and allocate responsibilities

Company lead: confirm the equipment, operating manual, current competent inspection, access, surface, power and installation team. Check initial testing for new units and the annual inspection record; remove defective or out-of-test equipment from hire. Record the applicable inspection details and confirm the operator training required for the job.

Hirer / event organiser: obtain venue permission, provide accurate space and access details, identify underground services and agree emergency and supervision arrangements. **Named operator / supervisor:** understand the unit’s limits, monitoring and emergency procedures. Appoint enough trained adults to observe all play areas and exits; one person may not be sufficient for a large unit.

2. Arrival, site assessment and handling

Report to the hirer or venue representative. Agree the working area, pedestrian exclusion and vehicle route; use a banksman where visibility is restricted and travel at a safe walking pace onsite. Keep escape routes and emergency access clear. Check ground firmness, slope, debris, overhead obstructions, ceiling fittings, nearby walls, water and traffic.

Check the complete operating footprint, including anchors, blower and safe clearance, against the manual. Confirm safe locations for stakes before penetrating the ground; do not peg where services are unknown. Plan unloading with suitable trolleys, access and sufficient people. Assess the load, route and individual capability; do not attempt an unsafe lift or drag.

3. Position and secure the inflatable

Follow the unit’s anchorage plan and use every required anchor, including upper stabilising points. Six is a minimum, not a substitute for the number and arrangement specified for the unit. Do not treat upper stabilisers as replacements for base anchorage. Use sound fixings and ropes, without improvised bungee cords.

On suitable ground, use metal stakes at least 380 mm long and 16 mm in diameter with the required rounded top/ring arrangement, installed as instructed. Outdoor hardstanding requires a verified anchorage design: HSE specifies at least 163 kg per ballast anchor, or suitably installed anchors rated at least 1600 N. Do not improvise weights or assume this minimum suits every device. Indoors, secure against movement and overturning as the manual requires. If suitable anchorage cannot be achieved, do not install.

Checks before opening

EC-MS-01 | Installation, handover and operation

4. Power, blower and inflation

Use the specified blower, supply and accessories. Inspect plugs, cables, guards, blower inlet and outlet/non-return flap before use; isolate equipment before clearing debris. Keep the blower and controls inaccessible to participants. Secure the inflation tube and close vents as instructed, without restricting airflow.

Use a safe supply with suitable protection; where RCD protection is used for personal protection, use a device rated no more than 30 mA and test it before use. A competent person must resolve supply or generator protection questions. Use correctly rated outdoor leads where needed, fully unwind cable reels, protect connections from water and route/protect cables to avoid trips, crushing and overload.

Keep people off during inflation. Examine fabric, seams, netting, anchor straps, shape and rigidity. Position suitable impact-absorbing mats at access/exit and exposed fall areas in accordance with the manual. Before admitting users, test the empty unit's response to blower power loss: it must retain a safe escape route long enough for evacuation. Reinflate and recheck before opening.

5. Wind and inflation pressure

Outdoor wind: use and record anemometer readings at the site, including gusts, before opening and regularly throughout operation. Forecasts support planning but cannot replace onsite measurements. Never operate above 24 mph (38 km/h), or above a lower manufacturer limit. Set a conservative stop trigger and act early enough to clear the unit before that limit; stop immediately if conditions become unsafe.

Pressure: use a suitable manometer or equivalent device to measure and record internal pressure before use and at regular intervals. The reading must remain within the manufacturer's permitted range. Without a suitable pressure instrument, do not operate; without an anemometer, do not operate outdoors. Record the limits and monitoring intervals on the site sheet; increase checks when conditions change.

6. Handover and continuous supervision

Before opening, brief the named adult operator and supervisors; demonstrate evacuation, safe shutdown, monitoring and the unit's user limits. Provide the manual/hire instructions, emergency contact, anemometer for outdoor operation and pressure-measuring arrangements. Record who accepts supervision and who will take readings. Do not open if these arrangements are incomplete.

Maintain constant supervision by a suitably trained adult, with additional attendants where the layout requires them. Follow the unit's capacity and height limits; separate users by size. Keep entrances and slide run-outs clear. No wall climbing, somersaults, rough play or jumping from the entrance. For slides and obstacles, follow the prescribed direction and release users only when the next section is clear. Remove shoes, sharp objects and loose jewellery; follow the manual on clothing and glasses. Exclude intoxicated users and stop unsafe behaviour.

Safe operation & closure

EC-MS-01 | Monitoring, emergency response and collection

7. Monitor and stop when needed

Observe play and conditions continuously. Record wind/pressure readings and inspect anchors, mats, blower tubes and cables at the agreed intervals, after interruption and whenever conditions change. Stop for rain or a wet/slippery surface, lightning, unsafe heat, poor visibility, anchor movement, loss of pressure, damage or absent supervision. A shower cover does not make unsafe conditions acceptable.

During a break, close access and follow the shutdown instructions; prevent unauthorised use. The hirer must not move the inflatable, adjust anchorage or change the blower. Reopening requires the cause of the stoppage to be resolved and the relevant checks repeated by the responsible person. Contact the company if there is any doubt.

8. Emergency action

Stop entry. Clear the unit. Keep people safe.

Direct users calmly through the normal exit; check all sections and assist anyone needing help without creating further danger. Keep bystanders away. For injury, fire, electrical danger or an uncontrolled moving structure, use the venue emergency plan and call **999** when needed. Give the exact location and emergency access point. Do not try to hold down a moving inflatable.

For power/pressure loss, evacuate immediately and prevent re-entry. For electrical faults, isolate the supply only when safe; do not touch live or damaged components. Planned shutdown follows evacuation; urgent isolation may be needed immediately for electrical danger. Provide first aid within competence, inform the organiser and call **07900 084 999**. Record the incident or near miss. Keep faulty equipment out of service until checked and released by a competent person; management should consider applicable reporting duties.

9. Generators, cleaning and collection

If a generator is used, agree a separate fuel/fire/power assessment. Run it outdoors in a well-ventilated position away from doors, windows, air intakes, the inflatable and the public. Never use it inside a hall or enclosed area. Only a competent authorised person may refuel: clear the inflatable first, stop the engine and let it cool. Store fuel safely in approved containers, manage spills and prohibit smoking and ignition sources.

At collection, close access, account for all users and keep the work area clear. Deflate in the manufacturer's sequence, retaining anchorage until safe to release. Isolate and disconnect power, collect stakes and equipment, then fold and move using the handling plan. Inspect for damage and contamination, clean/dry using suitable products and follow their safety instructions. Record defects and quarantine unsafe equipment. Leave the venue clear and report any remaining concern to its representative.

Records and review

Retain the site assessment/handover, inspection references, wind/pressure log, defects and incident records. Review this procedure by **14 November 2027**, or earlier following an incident, changed equipment, venue conditions or updated guidance. The company lead must check that the procedure matches the actual equipment and working arrangements before each hire.

Guidance checked 14 November 2026. The equipment manual and current inspection record must also be used. These documents are not HSE/PIPA certification.

HSE: play inflatable safety | HSE: risk assessment | HSE: electrical equipment | HSE: manual handling | HSE: event emergencies | PIPA: operator responsibilities and training | PIPA: anchorage calculations, TB08 | HSENI: portable generator precautions